



CSML

*Civil Society and Media Leadership Program*



**QUARTERLY REPORT**

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This quarter marked a unique period for the CSML program. Our regular five year program had previously been scheduled to end in February 2015. A No-Cost Extension (NCE) awarded in September, 2014 extended our program to May 31, 2015, a second NCE extended the program through June 30, 2015, and an anticipated Cost Extension (CE) was expected to allow CSML to remain in Liberia through November, with CE activities focused exclusively on promoting transparency and accountability around Ebola-related funding. A delay in finalization of the CE due to a congressional hold-up coupled with the indefinite nature of this hold led IREX to focus this quarter on two important but opposing activity areas: initiating program close-out activities such as closing out all grants, developing disposition plans, and planning final reports; while simultaneously planning for the CE which included a new set of activities requiring extensive planning and coordination.

As preparation for the CE, the Media Team conducted extensive planning meetings internally and with various stakeholders to prepare for establishment of the Situation Room and trainings for commercial and community radio outlets in Liberia's 15 counties. The Civil Society Team similarly worked with key partners to plan for trainings in Community Leaders' Forums (CLF) and Accountability which will be rolled out in 11 counties to civil society organizations and notably, communities. This focus on working directly with communities was born out of IREX's development of CLFs during the Ebola crisis, and these activities during the CE period will provide an excellent opportunity to further that engagement and ensure that accountability is understood and promoted at the local level. Further planning meetings prepared for the establishment of the Equipment Resources Pool (ERP), continuation of the SMS initiative, and expansion of the Everybody Business Forums and Women's Media Empowerment Groups. Engagement with various partners reinforced the strong network of stakeholders that IREX has built over the years to include established partners TCC, Social Impact, and regional and local consultants; as well as new engagement with the Liberian Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC), Nigerian firm BudgIT, and Search for Common Ground (SFCG). Fortunately, all of these meetings and preparatory actions prepared IREX and partners well for the upcoming CE which was eventually signed at the end of the quarter—June 29, 2015.

## 2. PROGRAM PURPOSE

*To sustain peace in Liberia through greater inclusion, giving a voice to, informing and engaging Liberian citizens.*

## 3. PROGRAM RESULTS

### **Annual Workplan Retreat Highlights Year Five Successes and Lessons Learned and Plans for the Cost Extension**

Key to continued success within our team and among our partners is taking the time to reflect on our accomplishments and our challenges, and building upon those lessons learned to improve and enhance our efforts and impact. On April 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, the IREX team met with Social Impact, USAID, The Carter Center and representatives of nine civil society and media partners to review our activities from Year Five, and present and discuss our plans for the expected CE period. Discussion focused on the impact of the Ebola crisis on our work and lives, and the activities we implemented to respond to the crisis. IREX's Senior Management Team expressed gratitude to the partners for the sacrifices and commitments they made to hold Community Leaders' Forums, and ensure that the media covered the crisis responsibly, despite risks and fears and in the face of personal loss.



## 4. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

## 4.1. MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

This quarter marked an unusual and challenging time period for CSML in regards to management. IREX was informed early in the quarter that the anticipated Cost Extension would likely be delayed and was potentially at risk of not being finalized, and thus IREX had to move forward with Close-Out activities in anticipation of a close-out date of May 31, 2015. In April, IREX received confirmation from USAID of an extension of a No-Cost Extension for an additional 30 days, to June 30, 2015. In light of the impending potential closing date of June 30<sup>th</sup>, the need to reduce costs, and reflecting the reduction in program activities, IREX gave termination letters to seven employees by May 31, 2015. Many of these staff members had been part of the CSML team since the program's beginning, and the termination of those staff was a challenging period for the CSML program and IREX team. These staff were informed that their jobs may become available again in the event that the CE was signed, but it was understood that some would need to move on to new opportunities. Fortunately, upon the signing of the CE on June 29<sup>th</sup>, most of these staff agreed to return to IREX with new contracts signed as of July 1<sup>st</sup>.

## 4.2. FINANCE, ADMINISTRATION, AND IT

### 4.2.1. FINANCE

#### 4.2.1.1. PERFORM ROUTINE FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

##### 4.2.1.1.1. ENSURE ONGOING FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF CSML (ONGOING)

The program continued to maintain its burn rate as final payments were made on various subgrants under the CSML program. Program expenditures for the quarter amounted to US\$422,000.00, representing approximately 17% of the annual budget of \$2,482,000.00.

##### 4.2.1.1.2. PROVIDE SUPPORT TO SUBGRANTEES ON MILESTONE PAYMENTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL RELATED ACTIVITIES (JULY-OCTOBER)

During the quarter, the Finance Office worked with the Grants and Program departments to make final payments on forty (40) subgrants for successful completion of all milestone activities outlined in various CSML subgrant agreements.

##### 4.2.1.1.3. PROVIDE SUPPORT TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS (ONGOING)

Throughout the quarter, the Finance Office provided routine support to all departments.

### 4.2.2. ADMINISTRATION

#### 4.2.2.1. ENSURE THAT US-HIRES' DOCUMENTATION IS UP-TO-DATE (ONGOING)

The Administration Office completed the process of work permit renewal for the Senior Program Manager at the Ministry of Labor during the quarter. Processing of work permit for the Sr. Civil Society Specialist also started during the reporting period, but was put on hold while awaiting the signing of the cost extension (CE). As the CE was signed on June 29<sup>th</sup>, this process will be finalized during the beginning of the upcoming quarter.

#### 4.2.2.2. REVIEW, UPDATE, AND ENSURE ALL PERSONNEL RECORDS ARE PROPERLY FILED (ONGOING)

The Finance and Administration Assistant routinely updated, reviewed, and properly filed all personnel records during the quarter.

#### 4.2.2.3. RENEW OFFICE LEASE AGREEMENT AND OTHER SERVICE CONTRACTS (ONGOING)

Office lease, security, and office yard maintenance contracts were renewed during the quarter for services up to June 30, 2015.

#### 4.2.2.4. ENSURE IKFO IS UPDATED ON A TIMELY BASIS (ONGOING)

During the quarter, seven staff employment contracts were terminated in line with CSML's close out plan. The Admin office finalized all termination Personnel Action Forms and uploaded termination documents to iKFO.

### 4.2.3. IT

#### 4.2.3.1. PROVIDE ONGOING IT SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE TO IREX (ONGOING)

During the Quarter, The IT Officer provided routine IT maintenance and support to the IREX team, this included supporting the Finance Office to troubleshoot technical problems with Quick Books software and recharging internet modems for IREX staff as needed. He also developed and implemented a table to track staff equipment and worked with the Grants Office to setup up links to key documents to improve their storage of and access to documents via the IREX shared drive.

#### 4.2.3.2. PROVIDE IT SUPPORT TO CSML PARTNERS

##### 4.2.3.2.1. SUPPORT LMC WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SMS INITIATIVE

IREX's subgrant to the Liberia Media Center (LMC) to implement the SMS initiative ended on March 31, 2015, thus there were no significant activities implemented under Objective 6 during this quarter. The IT Officer worked alongside the Senior Program Manager to hold Skype discussions with a representative of Frontline SMS in April and May to prepare a plan for their involvement if and when the funding is released. As the end of the quarter approached, the IREX team determined that the SMS initiative would move forward with the existing platform rather than transition to Frontline SMS, in light of the short time period for implementation.

##### 4.2.3.2.1.1. SUPPORT LMC WITH SERVER AND PLATFORM UPDATES (JULY)

In light of the decision referenced above to stay with the current SMS platform rather than transition to SMS, the IT Officer worked with the Senior Program Manager to brainstorm adjustments that need to be done to the existing platform to improve its usability during the CE period. Particularly as the platform will be used by 27 stations in 15 counties (as compared to the previous four hubs), its easy functionality and simplicity is necessary for effective implementation. The IT Officer supported the process of drafting the necessary deliverables and language for the contract with MWETANA, the IT firm that will update the platform. The contract with MWETANA is expected to be signed in early July and they are expected to complete all adjustments by July 18<sup>th</sup>.

As further support for the SMS implementation, the IT Officer checked with vendors to obtain three invoices to purchase licensing software for the LMC server and reached out to the 27 partner stations to determine the ideal provider, which will inform later purchasing of internet modems for all participating stations.

### 4.3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING FOR CSOS AND FOR INDEPENDENT MEDIA

#### 4.3.1. FULLY INTEGRATE CSML PARTNERS AND ENHANCE COLLABORATION

##### 4.3.1.1. ENHANCE COLLABORATION WITHIN CSML

##### 4.3.1.1.1. HOLD WEEKLY PARTNERS' MEETINGS

Due to the slowing down of activities during the quarter as a result of the anticipation of the CE, Program Meetings were held, though less frequently than weekly. The Program Team met every other week to touch base on the staff's progress in closing out CSML subgrants in line with the closeout schedule, while also simultaneously ensuring that all preparations for the expected CE were also underway. The Program team will resume weekly meetings as of July 2015.

##### 4.3.1.2. ENHANCE COLLABORATION WITH AND AMONG PARTNERS

*36 individuals (19 males and 17 females) participated in CSML's Annual Workplan Retreat at Kendeja.*

On April 8 and 9, IREX met with representatives of Social Impact, USAID, and Main Partners for a Workplan Retreat at R.L.J. Kendeja to review activities accomplished in Year Five, and outline and discuss planned activities for the CE period. Day one of the retreat focused on reflecting on the Achievements and Lessons Learned from Year Five. This was particularly meaningful for IREX staff and partners as it gave everyone an opportunity to reflect on one of the most challenging years in CSML's, let alone Liberia's, history. Partners reflected meaningfully on the challenges and successes they experienced during the Ebola crisis, and IREX expressed deep gratitude to the partners for their work and strength throughout that challenging time. Additionally, IREX and partners reflected on their activities during the 2014 Special Senatorial Election, which faced various challenges in light of the Ebola crisis, but also provided many opportunities for success and accomplishment among our partners.

On day two, IREX staff laid out plans for the CE, anticipating at the time that the CE funds would be received in late-April or May. While at the retreat, USAID informed IREX that the delay with the CE remained unresolved, and must be viewed as potentially indefinite. As a result, all presentations of planned activities for the CE were tempered with the realization that the CE may not come through and rather than implement the described activities, IREX and partners would have to begin planning for close-out.

The Agenda and Powerpoint presentation for the two-day Workplan Retreat at Kendeja is included with this report as Attachments 1 and 2.

#### 4.3.1.2.1. COMPILE AND SEND TRAINING MANUALS AND OTHER RESOURCE MATERIALS TO HQ

The Sr. CS Specialist finalized, edited, and re-formatted the Training of Trainers (ToT) facilitator's manual, designed for 5-10 days of training including practical experience. Topics include adult learning principles, training needs assessment, developing training objectives, training techniques, facilitation skills, giving feedback, monitoring training, evaluating training, and micro-training practical experience. The Manual is included with this report as Attachment 3.

### 4.3.2. OBJECTIVE ONE: CSOS MEDIA AND TARGET COMMUNITIES HAVE CAPACITY TO PROMOTE POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH GOVERNMENT ON ADVOCACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ISSUES

#### 4.3.2.1. EXPAND THE ROLE OF THE SITUATION ROOM IN PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

##### 4.3.2.1.1. ENHANCE ACCESS TO ACCURATE INFORMATION ON EBOLA-RELATED FUNDS/RESOURCES

##### 4.3.2.1.1.1. ESTABLISH EBOLA FUNDING TRACKING DATABASE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL NGO

In preparation for the CE, IREX began exploring the West African region for consultants to train local civil society and media partners on how to develop a database to track Ebola funds. In May, IREX learned about BudgIT, a Nigerian-based firm founded in 2011 to analyze the Nigerian budget and help citizens understand and participate in the budget process. In the last year, the organization has been working on a separate initiative to analyze international Ebola funds earmarked for Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Nigeria.

IREX began communicating with BudgIT via email in early June. After a series of email conversations, a team from BudgIT arrived in Liberia on June 11 to meet with IREX staff to discuss a proposed partnership. Oluseun Onigbinde, BudgIT's Lead Partner, and Abiola Afolabi, Lead Researcher, met with the IREX senior management team to discuss the Situation Room proposal. IREX explained the CE proposal to the BudgIT team and asked if they could create an interactive database to track Ebola funds in Liberia and train a local civil society organization to manage it.

When the CE was approved on June 29<sup>th</sup>, IREX communicated with BudgIT via phone, Skype, and email to finalize details of the Situation Room proposal and discuss the budget and contract. BudgIT submitted a proposal and

budget. IREX reviewed it, provided feedback and drafted a contract for BudgIT's review. BudgIT made the requested adjustments to the proposal and accepted the proposed budget of \$45,000 and the contract.

During the period under review, IREX also decided to select the local partner to manage the website through a competitive process. IREX developed an RFA to send to its seven main partners who then disseminated the information to their mentee CSOs. July 2 is the deadline to apply for the grant.

#### 4.3.2.2. STRENGTHEN CAPACITY OF COMMUNITY LEADERS AND CSOS TO PROMOTE ACCOUNTABILITY

After the CE extension was signed, the partner organizations worked quickly to recruit, select, and prepare staff for positions for which they had lost employees during the period without grant funds. They also worked on submitting proposal narratives, budgets and timelines.

The USAID Democracy, Rights, and Governance (DRG) Team made ten used laptop computers available for CSOs with the greatest need. The CS Team consulted the RPs and RSC and provided a list of CSOs to the DRG Team which in turn selected the final 10 CSOs to receive them. Because IREX had no partners traveling to the field during this period, several CSOs traveled to Monrovia to receive the laptops, for which they were very thankful. The CSO managers receiving them each signed an MOU stating that they would be used solely for official business of their organization. Laptops were also made available to media outlets, as described in section 2.5.1.

##### 4.3.2.2.1. PROVIDE TRAINING TO COMMUNITY LEADERS IN ACCOUNTABILITY, FOI, AND LEADERSHIP

###### 4.3.2.2.1.1. DEVELOP TRAINING MATERIALS

Negotiations were completed and a contract was signed with consultant William Saa to plan a three-day training program for community leaders to include topics on understanding accountability, how to promote and request it from government and NGOs, use of the Freedom of Information (FOI) law and the Situation Room, and leadership principles. The consultant attended the meeting with BudgIT, the Nigerian organization IREX will contract to establish the Ebola funds database, and they remained in contact with one another to coordinate on the ToT. The consultant also worked with the Liberian Anti-Corruption Commission to exchange and share training materials and coordinated with The Carter Center (TCC) for training on FOI.

###### 4.3.2.2.1.2. DELIVER TOT AND CLF WORKSHOP TO MPS AND CSOS (JULY-AUGUST)

Based on the training manual that the consultant is developing for communities, he also made plans for a four-day ToT for the 13 Main Partners (MPs) and CSOs who will deliver the 3-day training to the communities. Because of the number of partners, the ToT will be delivered twice, July 14-17 (mostly MPs) and July 21-24 (other partner CSOs). The ToTs will provide the content of the community training and involve participants in discussing and confirming effective methodologies. During the first ToT the consultant will have an assistant enter new input as it is discussed and finalized. The training manual will therefore not be considered complete until the end of the first ToT.

The CS Team also made preliminary plans for the one-day Community Leaders' Forum (CLF) refresher workshop to be held July 13 for MPs and two CSOs. Besides experience sharing on techniques that proved effective in holding successful CLFs, it will include a discussion of how to manage funds with the communities. This will be a new experience to most of the MP staff, and the discussion will look at approaches for groups of people that are not unified through an organization and have no systems for funds management or set policies for working together. Because there are likely to be issues of mistrust among community members the MPs and CSOs will lead communities in selecting a project chairperson and vice chairperson. The mentoring team will manage the funds closely, not signing actual grant agreements, but rather demonstrating through mentoring how they would plan their work, write a proposal, implement and monitor activities, and manage funds. Plans for the workshop also include small group work to design various forms and policies needed for these new activities, such as criteria for selecting the community leaders, MOUs of commitment for community leaders before receiving training, a Funds Request Form, and a Community Mentoring Checklist.



The other five participating CSOs will have their CLF workshop the following week, July 20. It will follow the same agenda, except that time will be used for familiarizing them with the forms and policies already designed by the MPs the prior week.

#### 4.3.2.3. COLLABORATE WITH GOVERNMENT IN ITS PROMOTION OF ACCOUNTABILITY

##### 4.3.2.3.1. COLLABORATE WITH LACC ON TRAINING MATERIALS

The CS Team met with the Program Manager for Education and Prevention at the Liberian Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) and agreed to collaborate on training. LACC will provide materials they have developed related to accountability, which the CSML training consultant will work into the CSML training. IREX will in turn share its final materials with LACC for their possible use and invite LACC representatives to training workshops for discussion and Q&A. The training consultant then met with the LACC Education and Prevention team to discuss the training content. The material LACC provided, a module on integrity, was then integrated into the CSML training, and the LACC team was invited to join the July 14-17 and July 21-24 training.

#### 4.3.2.4. EMPOWER COMMUNITY LEADERS TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT COMMUNITY-DRIVEN EBOLA RESPONSE PLANS THROUGH COMMUNITY LEADERS' FORUMS (CLFs)

The work planned for the CLF Workshop for MPs and CSOs (section 4.3.2.2.1.2.) included preparing these partners for community re-entry, selection of community leaders for the project, developing and implementing an effective action plan, mentoring the community leaders on their Ebola accountability work, and managing community support funds.

#### 4.3.2.5. ENHANCE THE ABILITY OF MONROVIA-BASED AND COMMUNITY RADIO JOURNALISTS TO REPORT RESPONSIBLY AND ACCURATELY ON EBOLA-RELATED FUNDING AND ACCOUNTABILITY ISSUES

##### 4.3.2.5.1. CONDUCT TRAINING OF TRAINERS FOR MEDIA MOBILIZERS AND MEDIA MAIN PARTNERS ON ACCOUNTABILITY

##### 4.3.2.5.1.1. TRAIN MONROVIA-BASED REPORTERS AND CRS JOURNALISTS TO CREATE CONTENT ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND PURSUE INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING STORIES

During the period under review, IREX contacted Lanre Arogundade, a Nigerian media consultant to conduct the week-long ToT on media accountability for four Media Mobilizers (MMs). Lanre will train the MMs so they can train Monrovia-based and community radio journalists how to report and develop news content on accountability of Ebola funds. The ToT for media mobilizers is planned for June 13-17, 2015.

IREX contacted four veteran Liberian journalists to serve as Media Mobilizers and participate in the ToT so they can train local journalists. The MMs are Frank Sainworla, former station manager of Radio Veritas; Korta Dogba, Varney Kamara and Michael Toh, all former radio producers and journalists at the defunct STAR radio.

### 4.3.3. OBJECTIVE FOUR: INDEPENDENT MEDIA OPERATES MORE PROFESSIONALLY

*Four (4) SCBDI reporters published a total of eight (8) stories following a reporting trip to Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties.*

Naomi Falika, one of the Women's Media Initiative (WMI) Scholars, graduated in April with a degree in Mass Communications from United Methodist University. Naomi was first awarded the WMI scholarship in 2012 and is the fourth WMI scholar to graduate. Initially, Naomi served as an intern at the Liberia Women Media Democracy Radio (LWDR), but is now working as a full-time reporter. Naomi credited IREX and USAID for assisting her with her academic achievement and professional development. "My career has been successful so far because of the mentoring and support from IREX," she said. "Most university students go through university and never get a chance for practical experience. Through the WMI program, I was able to further my education and practice journalism."



Also, during the quarter, two WMI mentees began internships at Radio Veritas. The young women were hired as a result of the Liberia Women Media Action Committee's (LIWOMAC) outreach to other media outlets. In the last year, LIWOMAC developed a directory comprising resumes and work portfolio of its mentees to share with media outlets. Media outlets can use the directory to identify qualified candidates for reporting positions.

Monrovia-based reporters made one trip during the quarter. On April 10, five reporters under the Specialized Consulting Business Development program traveled to Nimba and Grand Bassa counties on a five-day trip aimed at investigating the impact of employee layoffs on Acellor Mittal mining activities in Liberia as well as to follow-up on Ebola orphans and the impact of Ebola on academic institutions. Four of the five reporters published stories from the trip. Between April 17 and 19, reporter Reuben Sei Waylaun published four stories under headlines: "Labor Commissioner Rules in Favor of Aggrieved Acellor Mittal Contractors"; "Ebola blamed for Enrollment Decline at Nimba Community College"; "Ebola Orphans Solicit Assistance"; and "Cross Border Trade Resumes in Ganta." On April 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, Mark Mengofia published two stories in Women Voices newspaper: "Nimba Orphans Cry for Support"; and "Guinea Reopens Border with Liberia." On April 20, Esau Farr of the Liberia Women Democracy Radio reported on the challenges of Ganta's JW Pearson School post-Ebola; and Alice Mae Wellington of SKY-TV produced a story on a skills training provided to 20 Ebola survivors.

Due to the delay in receipt of Cost Extension funds, the Media team worked with media partners in April to close out all subgrant agreements, including those implemented by the LMC, LIWOMAC, PUL and CEMESP for election, Ebola, and general program-related activities. The media team closed out all grants at the end of April.

#### 4.3.3.1. ENHANCE MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF MEDIA PARTNERS

##### 4.3.3.1.1. MONROVIA-BASED OUTLETS

###### 4.3.3.1.1.1. REVISE THE MCAT TO FOCUS ON HOW MONROVIA-BASED OUTLETS ARE COVERING ACCOUNTABILITY

In preparation for the CE, the Senior Media Specialist began reviewing the Media Content Analysis Tool (MCAT) to focus on media coverage of activities related to accountability of Ebola funds. The review took place in late June when IREX learned that the signing of the CE was imminent. The Media Team completed a draft of the new MCAT for Monrovia-based outlets and planned to finalize it in early July. The plan is to analyze six radio stations and nine newspapers. The radio stations targeted for MCAT include: Radio Veritas, SKY-FM, Truth FM, ELBC, Fabric FM and the Liberia Women Democracy Radio (LWDR). In the print category, the MCAT will review Frontpage Africa, Daily Observer, Heritage, Informer, Public Agenda, Inprofile, New Democrat, Women Voices and the Inquirer.

During the CE phase, IREX plans to examine the extent to which accountability of Ebola funds is featured in Monrovia-based media and the community radio sector. The findings will be shared with the Press Union of Liberia (PUL) and the Center for Media Studies and Peace Building (CEMESP) to engage their members and encourage them to strengthen their reporting on accountability and transparency.

###### 4.3.3.1.1.2. CONDUCT REFRESHER TRAINING FOR MEDIA CODERS ON CODING ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTING

In late June, the Media Team began preparing for a one-day training for media coders on the new MCAT focusing on accountability of Ebola funds. The Media Team shared the draft MCAT tool with the coders for feedback. The tool will be finalized in early July.

IREX hired Sol Plaatje Fellow Samuka Konneh as Media Program associate. The MCAT program is one of Samuka's primary duties. He will supervise the coders and write the MCAT report for sharing with media organizations and outlets.

#### 4.3.4. OBJECTIVE FIVE: COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITY, IMPROVE REACH AND HAVE THE TECHNICAL CAPACITY TO BETTER SERVE TARGETED COMMUNITIES

##### 4.3.4.1. EXPAND TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO CRSS IN 15 COUNTIES

USAID's DRG Team made 14 used laptop computers available for Community Radio Stations with the greatest needs. The media team consulted with MMPs and provided a list of suggested recipients to the DRG Team which in turn selected the final 14 media partners to receive them. Recipients include: LUX-FM, Radio Veritas, both in Monrovia; Voice of Rural Montserrado, Bensoville, Montserrado County; Radio Vahun and Radio Kintoma, Lofa County; Radio Bomi, Tubmanburg, Bomi County; Radio Tappita, Radio Kerghemahn and Voice of Saclepea, in Nimba County; Magic FM, Buchanan, Grand Bassa County; Radio Jorwah and Radio Bong Mines, Bong County; Voice of Webbo, and Radio Gee, River Gee. Laptops were also made available to CSO partners, as described in section 4.3.2.2.

##### 4.3.4.1.1. SELECT 8 NEW STATIONS JOINING CSML

*Eight (8) stations have been selected to join the CSML program as community radio partners.*

During the quarter, IREX finalized the list of eight stations that will be added to CSML as part of the Cost Extension. The new stations joining CSML radio stations include: Radio Bomi, Bomi County; Radio Gbarnga, Bong County; Smile FM, Grand Gedeh; Rivercess Broadcasting System, Rivercess County; Radio Mawopnet, Grand Cape Mount County; Radio Kpo, Gbarpolu County; Radio Sinoe, Sinoe County; and the Voice of Grand Kru, Grand Kru County.

IREX began working with the new stations under the E-CAP project launched in response to the Ebola crisis. IREX worked with the stations long enough to understand their technical and editorial capacity to participate in the CE.

##### 4.3.4.1.2. ASSESS TECHNICAL CAPACITY OF CRSS

During the quarter, the Senior Media Specialist met with the lead technician at the Liberia Media Center to discuss plans to conduct a technical assessment of the 27 partner CRSSs to identify potential problems before implementation of the CE activities. The technician plans to do some telephone interviews and visit stations that are having technical difficulties that have the potential to keep them off the air during the height of the CE activities. The technician identified Voice of Webbo in Grand Gedeh and Voice of Kpo as high priorities for technical assistance. Both stations have been off the air for months. Voice of Webbo is rebuilding a new studio and is awaiting the installation of a new 500-watts transmitter. Voice of Kpo has been off the air since March because its transmitter broke down. After the CE was approved on June 29, IREX and the technician contacted the station manager to offer assistance. The technical visits are expected to begin in July.

##### 4.3.4.1.3. CREATE HELP DESK AT ALICOR TO RESPOND TO TECHNICAL PROBLEMS FROM CRSS

During the period under review, the Media Team held several meetings with the Association of Liberia Community Radios (ALICOR) to discuss their plans for managing the Help Desk. In anticipation of the CE approval, the Media Team prepared a proposal template in preparation for ALICOR's FOG application and shared the draft work plan narrative with ALICOR enabling them to begin thinking about their role under the CE.

Under the CE, the Help Desk will respond to phone calls and emails from CRSSs and work to respond to those problems. ALICOR will dispatch the three regional Service Technicians to respond to technical problems that may impede or delay implementation of the CE activities. Two of the RSTs will be based in Gbarnga and one in Monrovia. IREX will work with ALICOR to develop a system for tracking repairs, and ensuring accountability of the RSTs in the field as well as the recipient CRSSs.

In addition to providing technical support, the Help Desk will also communicate availability of replacement parts and equipment that are available at the Equipment Resource Pool (ERP).

#### 4.3.4.2. ENHANCE MANAGEMENT OF EQUIPMENT RESOURCE POOL (ERP)

##### 4.3.4.2.1. ESTABLISH THE ERP

During the quarter, the spare parts and other equipment earmarked for the Equipment Resource Pool (ERP) arrived in Liberia. During the period, IREX worked to finalize the duty free documents for the equipment and to determine the disposition plan for the equipment due to the uncertainty of the CE. IREX's IT Officer and the LMC lead technician developed an inventory database to track all of the items, including a description, coding, serial number, quantity and working condition of each item received. The equipment also included a teleprompter, computers, and video cameras for SKY television.

Initially, IREX had planned to establish the ERP at DEN-L because of its proximity to CRSs, however this plan was adjusted due to the shortened timeframe of the CE. The ERP will now be based at the University of Liberia Mass Communications Department. The department will house the equipment at LUX FM's new location at Fendell, and manage the ERP in collaboration with ALICOR and the LMC. The department is well suited to pilot the program because of the pivotal role it plays in media development in Liberia. Locating the ERP at UL will be a valuable learning experience for journalism students.

The LMC will provide technical support to the ERP. In July, the three partners will meet to discuss their role in the project. IREX plans to build the capacity of the staff at the LMC and ALICOR to manage the ERP, and to procure spare parts from abroad to replenish the ERP and set up a financial system to ensure greater accountability for funds deposited in the ERP bank account.

#### 4.3.4.3. STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF CITIZENS AND IN PARTICULAR WOMEN AS CONSUMERS OF COMMUNITY RADIO AND ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN CONTENT PRODUCTION

##### 4.3.4.3.1. HOLD "EVERYBODY BUSINESS" FORUMS IN EXISTING CSML COUNTIES AND EXPAND TO EIGHT NEW COUNTIES TO FOCUS ON GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES AND EBOLA INTERVENTIONS

*Three (3) "I Know my Rights" Forums were held in Montserrado County focused on customary law and children's' rights.*

LIWOMAC held three "I Know My Rights" forums in April in Todee, Mount Barclay and Bensonville Communities, all in Montserrado County. On April 14, participants in Todee discussed the rights of traditional married women under the new constitution. Without constitutional protection, traditional women are denied rights to property and child support. They are left to care for their children when they are abandoned by their husbands. The women said their husbands relocate to Monrovia under the guise of "seeking better opportunities and education," but usually find a new partner. The "Age of Consent" was the focus of the April 14th forum in Mount Barclay. Under customary law, the age of consent is 16, but the age of consent is 18 under the statutory law. Participants agreed that the law should be harmonized in alignment with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which sets 18 as the universal age of consent. On April 15, residents in Bensonville discussed the rights of children born out-of-wedlock. Participants discussed how those children are disinherited by their fathers. Only children whose fathers legitimize them in court are entitled to their fathers' property. The forum provided an opportunity to discuss the proposition that children should be treated equally under the new constitution, regardless of their birth status.

#### 4.3.5. OBJECTIVE SIX: SMS TECHNOLOGY IS USED AS A LINK BETWEEN PEOPLE AND THEIR LEADERS

##### 4.3.5.1. EXPAND USAGE AND ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY OF SMS PLATFORM

IREX's subgrant to the LMC to implement the SMS initiative ended on March 31, 2015. IREX's Senior Program Manager and IT Officer consulted with Frontline SMS via Skype in April and May to discuss the logistics of transitioning the platform to Frontline SMS upon receipt of the CE funds and Frontline SMS submitted a draft

Statement of Work (SOW) outlining the steps and funds required to successfully complete that transition. However, as of early June and due to the shorter timeframe of the anticipated CE, IREX decided that it was no longer feasible to move forward with the transition to Frontline SMS, as it would take several months to make the necessary software adjustments, train the LMC and IREX staff on the ground, and train all participating stations—leaving very little time for the stations to actually use the new platform or achieve any impact. It also would require additional time to test for sustainability and trouble shoot any technical challenges.

In June, IREX asked the LMC to submit a proposal and budget for their implementation of the SMS initiative under the CE period, in anticipation of the impending signing of the CE. The Senior Program Manager worked with the LMC team to finalize all FOG documents, and the grant is expected to be signed in early July, after which the LMC will begin implementing activities immediately.

#### 4.3.5.1.1. EXPAND SMS PLATFORM TO 27 PARTNER STATIONS

##### 4.3.5.1.1.1. SIMPLIFY SMS PLATFORM TO IMPROVE FUNCTIONALITY AND USER-END EXPERIENCE

Following the decision to maintain the existing platform rather than transition to Frontline SMS, the Senior Program Manager along with the IT Officer and LMC SMS team met to discuss a strategy moving forward to ensure the successful expansion of the SMS platform to 27 stations under the CE period, in light of time restrictions. It was decided that IREX would contract MWETANA, a Liberian IT firm that first developed the SMS platform, to make several adjustments to the existing platform to improve its functionality and usability. These adjustments include simplifying the coding system that listeners use to respond to Opinion Polls, and improving the organization of the backend of the platform, specifically the multi-value entry process. These adjustments come as a result of lessons learned via the implementation of the SMS platform under CSML, and the earlier expansion of the platform to 27 stations in 15 counties under another IREX partnership with Mercy Corps and PSI through the E-CAP program.

In June conversations were held with the MWETANA team to discuss the suggested adjustments and a contractual agreement was drafted, with signing delayed as a result of the CE delay. As the CE was signed in late June, the contract with MWETANA is expected to be signed in early July, with the adjustments completed by mid-month. IREX and the LMC will then conduct trainings via ToT and Regional Trainings to introduce the 27 stations to the updated platform.

### 4.3.6. OBJECTIVE SEVEN: ENGAGE CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE MEDIA TO ADVANCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RIGHT TO ACCESS TO INFORMATION

#### 4.3.6.1. RE-INTRODUCE LFIC HOTLINE TO EXPAND REQUEST TRACKING TO FOCUS ON EBOLA RESOURCE MONITORING THROUGH FOI REQUESTS, TO COLLATE THE REQUESTS AND RESPONSES, AND TO ISSUE QUARTERLY REPORTS

To prepare for the launch of the System for Tracking and Monitoring FOI (STAM-FOI) and the reintroduction of LFIC's FOI Hotline, TCC/ATI staff reviewed field input and finalized the draft procedures manual, accompanying annexes, and the data entry chart. Also during this quarter, TCC/ATI Senior Project Coordinator met with the LFIC Secretariat Coordinator to discuss training on system, and it was agreed that the Secretariat Coordinator in coordination with LMC and staff will be trained to carry-out/manage the monitoring, with the notion of hiring more monitors as necessary. Ahead of the launch of the STAM-FOI, TCC/ATI's seven county FOI networks have been sharing requests and responses with LFIC, while TCC/ATI has been working with LFIC on methods for collating and compiling them. Once the system is formally launched in July, all previous request data that has been accumulated by LFIC will be imported into the STAM-FOI chart. As part of the CSML cost-extension, TCC/ATI will support LFIC to expand request tracking to focus on Ebola resource monitoring through specific FOI requests.

#### 4.3.6.2. SUPPORT LFIC TO PUBLICIZE HOTLINE AND RAISE AWARENESS FOR FOI ACCOUNTABILITY

In addition to finalizing the STAM-FOI manual and coordinating the upcoming training, TCC/ATI also worked with LFIC to develop a plan for raising awareness of the system and the accompanying FOI Hotline. Under the awareness plan, the LFIC Secretariat will work with its member organizations to share the hotline number with participants during trainings, workshops, and meetings, while also explaining the value of the STAM-FOI and the FOI Hotline for EVD accountability. TCC/ATI will support its seven county FOI networks to do the same.

#### 4.3.6.3. SUPPORT LFIC MEMBERS TO UNDERTAKE FOI CAMPAIGN RELATED TO EBOLA

Earlier this year, the Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (CEMESP) concluded the key activities of its campaign to mobilize local CSOs/CBOs to file FOI requests on the use of Ebola resources in Bong and Grand Bassa counties. A total of 10 requests for information were filed and tracked, and CEMESP issued communications about the campaign activities on the director's Facebook page and in local newspapers. In May, CEMESP convened follow-up meetings of the FOI advocates in both counties to plan campaign close-out activities. Specifically, CEMESP supported the local CSOs and media groups that had been denied the requested information to file appeals with the Independent Information Commissioner. CEMESP then issued a press statement to share updates on the state of the campaign and provided interviews on two community radio stations in the counties—Super Bongese and Grand Bassa Peace FM. TCC/ATI also prepared to support additional campaigns under the CSML cost extension.

#### 4.3.6.4. STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS WITH NATIONAL CSOs AND KEY AGENCIES

TCC/ATI continued to support the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs, and Tourism (MICAT) and the multi-stakeholder steering committee in the implementation of the national Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) communication strategy. In response to the drop in Ebola cases within the country, the frequency of the meetings was reduced to two days each week. In April, committee partners met with the three national mobile phone companies to reach an agreement about support for continued messaging and sensitization of Ebola prevention. Under the agreement, the companies began disseminating two SMS messages per week for two months with one of the messages focusing more generally on Ebola prevention and the other specific to prevention at the border.

In May, the committee determined ways to continue supporting government communication after Liberia was declared Ebola-free and to help efforts to keep the country at zero transmission, while transitioning from crisis management to restoration. Messaging was tweaked to keep communities vigilant for the 90-day period following the declaration, and the communication committee was merged with the media and documentation committee, which previously was housed within the Ministry of Health. The terms of reference and operations framework for the newly merged committee were developed. Partners endorsed a TCC/ATI-proposed plan for more regular, senior-level meetings of MICAT and the health promotion division to share information and discuss areas of coordination.

In response to the unfortunate reemergence of EVD in Liberia in late June, TCC/ATI partook in committee discussions and actions to re-energize communication support, increase information sharing about EVD-response efforts, address communication challenges, ensure consistency of messaging across different media, and apply pressure in areas where the government and key national/international partners need to strengthen their response (e.g. using communications to ensure that sufficient EVD treatment beds are available, etc.).

#### 4.3.6.5. SUPPORT NETWORKS IN FIVE COUNTIES TO IDENTIFY INFORMATION NEEDS, RAISE AWARENESS, REQUEST INFORMATION, AND SERVE AS PART OF THE "FEEDBACK LOOP"

*Over one thousand and sixty (1060) individuals in seven (7) counties benefited from information sessions and awareness raising meetings on FOI and request making.*

In April, TCC/ATI continued to provide technical assistance to seven county FOI Networks that serve on and support their county-level task forces in an effort to encourage dissemination of Ebola prevention and resource information and gather and share community feedback on the effectiveness of the Ebola interventions. As with previous quarters, concerns continued to center around the use of the Ebola resources and funds and the need for greater transparency and accountability. During communication committee meetings, TCC/ATI shared this feedback and

committee partners agreed with TCC/ATI's suggested plan to integrate more county and community locals into the committee, especially as international partners began to leave Liberia following the drastic reduction in EVD cases. Part of the TCC/ATI plan includes the continued use of the county FOI networks to meet and feed back to the Monrovia-based communication committee so that challenges or issues flagged can be taken to the policy level for discussion or fed into the national message or plan of action.

#### 4.3.6.6. SUPPORT COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS TO GENERATE PROGRAMS AROUND FOI REQUESTS AND RESPONSES

As with previous quarters, to ensure MICAT briefings reach the county level, TCC/ATI continued to support MICAT's Public Affairs Department in capturing key points from the weekly briefings and sharing them with 12 community radio stations across eight counties. Additionally, TCC/ATI assisted MICAT and the committee in organizing and facilitating part of a training for community radio journalists from Maryland, Grand Kru, River Gee, and Grand Gedeh counties on how to effectively help communicate government information on health restoration after the Ebola crisis. There were a total of 20 participants including local government officials. During the meeting, TCC/ATI Senior Project Coordinator spoke about effective networking to report health and development issues at the national and sub national levels, as well as the value in using the FOI law by requesting information to better inform communities. The Deputy Information Minister for Public Affairs led sessions on government communication strategies, including the Daily Briefing, and enlisted the support of the community radio journalists for ensuring messages reach the people of Liberia. The Deputy Minister provided his contact information and offered to address inquiries from subnational levels.

In May, TCC/ATI supported media more broadly. For example, TCC/ATI Senior Project Coordinator spoke on the value of the FOI law to journalists, as well as civil society representatives and the local county authorities in Grand Gedeh. The Senior Project Coordinator had travelled to Grand Gedeh to participate in the Press Union of Liberia's program to mark World Press Freedom Day, which TCC/ATI helped to coordinate. At the program in Zwedru, Senior Project Coordinator urged journalists to file requests for information to deepen their reporting and noted that journalists should not only be interested in advocating for the passage of the law, but also using it. He emphasized that in addition to improving investigative reporting, filing requests for information will help national efforts to make public officials more accountable. TCC/ATI also distributed FOI handouts. Also in May, TCC/ATI Senior Project Coordinator presented at a Liberia Media Center event on the use of FOI requests to assess government compliance with the FOI law. There were more than 75 civil society, government, and media representatives.

In June, TCC/ATI Senior Project Coordinator met with the managers of Radio Kintoma in Lofa county and Radio Nimba in Nimba county to discuss their support in disseminating government health messages as well as communication of Ebola related FOI requests with the local networks in their respective regions.

#### 4.3.7. OBJECTIVE NINE: SOCIAL ENTERPRISES SUPPORT REGIONAL CSOS AND CRSS IN ATTAINING INSTITUTIONAL AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

##### 4.3.7.1. SUPPORT DEN-L AND RSC TEAM TO ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE EXIT STRATEGY FOR THE RSC

Plans have been concluded with DEN-L for an initial meeting to kick start discussions for developing an effective exit strategy that will keep the RSC functional without IREX's support.

During the wait period on the CE, DEN-L like other partners had to lay off staff. DEN-L recalled four of the RSC staff persons that are expected to lead the CLFs. These four individuals facilitated CLFs last year and are familiar with the communities they have recommended to IREX.



The Sr. Program Officer shared with the DEN-L team a copy of the proposal package including their budget amount listed in five categories (Personnel, Training, Travel, Grants and ODC). The breakdown is intended to help them plan their budgets in line with IREX standard and fast track the proposal development process.

#### **4.4. GENDER AND YOUTH**

##### **4.4.1. ENSURE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENDER AND YOUTH MAINSTREAMING STRATEGIES**

###### **4.4.1.1. PROVIDE TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO MAIN PARTNERS AND CONSULTANTS TO MAINSTREAM GENDER IN THE PROPOSALS AND TRAINING PLANS**

To ensure that gender and youth concerns were addressed in proposals and training plans for the CE period, the Gender and Youth Manager attended several meetings and one-on-one engagements with the civil society and media partners and provided insights to mainstream gender in training plans and proposals.

###### **4.4.1.2. SUPPORT THE MEDIA TEAM TO MONITOR AND MENTOR FEMALE JOURNALISTS AND COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS REPORTING ON ISSUES OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY**

In June, the Gender and Youth Manager participated in the LIWOMAC project development planning meeting and provided input to proposed activities and implementation plans. She also supported the Media Team by developing a draft proposal template for LIWOMAC and ALICOR and prepared the FOG and concurrence for the LIWOMAC proposal.

#### **4.5. GRANTS**

##### **4.5.1. ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH USAID AND IREX POLICIES**

###### **4.5.1.1. ENSURE ALL SUBGRANT DOCUMENTS ARE PROPERLY FILED IN LINE WITH CSML CLOSEOUT SCHEDULE**

During the quarter, the Grants Office worked with the program departments to close several subgrants in line with subgrant end dates. The office actively maintained and properly filed final subgrant documents during the period under review. The Grants Team also prepared a filing checklist that will be filed on top of each sub-grant to determine which documents are filed and which are not, as well as which documents are uploaded to iKNOW.

###### **4.5.1.1.1. ENSURE ALL SUBGRANT INFORMATION IS POSTED INTO iKNOW TRACKING SYSTEM REGULARLY**

Throughout the quarter, the Grants Office uploaded sixty-five (65) assorted subgrant documents to iKNOW (IREX's online sub-award tracking system).

###### **4.5.1.2. PROVIDE SUPPORT TO SUBGRANTEES ON CLOSE-OUT ACTIVITIES**

The Grants office provided support to the program departments on closure of over forty (40) sub-grants during the quarter.

#### **4.6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Due to the delay in receiving the Cost Extension, Social Impact M&E staff contracts ended as of May 15<sup>th</sup>. Previous to their exit, the M&E team developed handover notes and submitted all M&E files to IREX Liberia for storage and as a record of M&E staff responsibilities. As the CE was officially signed on June 29<sup>th</sup>, IREX is now working with Social Impact to determine the strategy moving forward in regards to bringing back the M&E team.

##### **4.6.1. ADMINISTER THE REVISED MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN FOR THE CE PERIOD**



The M&E team at CSML joined by the team from Social Impact (SI) attended the two-day Workplan Retreat, as described in section 4.3.1.2. On the first day of the retreat the M&E team did a PowerPoint presentation on their key achievements and lessons learned during Year Five and on the second and final day of the retreat, the M&E team presented its proposed plan of activities for the CE period.

#### 4.6.1.1. USE THE MEDIA CONTENT ANALYSIS TOOL (MCAT) TO MONITOR MEDIA COVERAGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY ISSUES

*In April, three-hundred and forty-four (344) stories were coded to track the content and quality of partners' media stories.*

In April, the Three Media Content Analysis coders employed to analyze print and radio outlets continued to collect data to track if and how, media partners/grantees and reporters are providing useful, balanced and impartial content to the Liberian people. During the month, the coders coded stories from eight media institutions: the Daily Observer, Public Agenda, Informer, Women Voices, Heritage, LWDR, Sky, and ELUM. During the period a total of 382 stories were coded: 344 newspaper stories, 19 radio news stories, 9 talk shows and 10 TV news stories. Data from the MCAT was entered and stored using excel data base for analysis.

With the CE approved, the coders will adjust their focus to track accountability-related stories as described in section 4.3.3.1.1.2.

### 4.7. SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND

In anticipation of the CE, IREX worked with Search for Common Ground (SFCG) in June to draft their workplan narrative and prepare a timeline for the CE period. With the signing of the CE in late June, engagement meetings with SFCG are planned for early June, and both IREX and SFCG hope to work with our HQ offices to have the partnership agreement signed soon to enable activity implementation to begin.

## 5. ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: CE Workplan Retreat Agenda
- Attachment 2: CE Workplan Retreat PowerPoint
- Attachment 3: CSML ToT Training Manual